Van Dijk at Celtic | 2018 player calendar | Record Reds signings | New training range | LFC on Instagram

LIVERPOOL FC

Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine liverpoolfc.com



GEORGINIO WIJNALDUM
HIS CHAMPIONS LEAGUE DREAM

RAGNAR KLAVAN
HIS MISSION FOR CLUB & COUNTRY

WHAT A DEBUT!





VIRGIL
"IT'S GOING TO BE NICE"



ISSUE 66 FEBRUARY 2018

Contents

It's been an eventful start to 2018 for Liverpool FC, to say the least, and this first issue of the year brings you all the latest from Anfield and elsewhere

LIVERPOOL

The lively front section exploring the wider LFC world and keeping fans up-to-date with what's happening at home and abroad

FOOTBALL

The stuff that happens on the pitch: exclusive interviews with current stars, the stats that matter plus blasts from the past

CLUB

Reaching out to communities at home and abroad, plus Anfield updates and the latest awesome official merchandise



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FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE Liverpool versus Everton in front of a full house at Anfield and a place in the fourth round of the FA Cup, along with local bragging rights, awaiting the winners. The Reds were hoping to extend their unbeaten run against the Blues to 16 matches – which would be their



longest-ever such sequence in Merseyside derby history – but to do that they would have to beat their neighbours for the first time in the FA Cup on home soil. To date there had been four ties in the past, all of them drawn, with the Toffees winning three of the subsequent replays at Goodison Park...



COMETH THE HOUR... Cometh the van Dijk. James Milner had put the Reds in front after 35 minutes with his eleventh successful spot-kick for Liverpool (having failed to score with his previous two efforts before this tie) only for Gylfi Sigurdsson to square things in the second half after a Blues



breakaway. A replay beckoned once again between these two opponents in the FA Cup before the Reds won a corner at the Kop-end. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain swung it in from the left and up rose Liverpool centre-backs Joel Matip and Virgil van Dijk, the latter making his debut for his new team...



YOU BEAUTY! It was the stuff of dreams for Van Dijk as he headed into the Everton net to send team-mates and Kopites delirious. "It was nice that Virgil could score in his first game," said Liverpool manager Jürgen Klopp. "I am really happy [and] in front of the Kop makes it even better."


WU
WESTERN UNION
21



MAGIC MO First Mohamed Salah was named CAF African player of the year for 2017, beating team-mate Sadio Mane and Borussia Dortmund striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang to the award. Then he was named PFA player of the month for December, having also scooped the prize in November.


1892
2017
L.F.C.
125 YEARS

YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
1892 LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB 2017
EST·1892
125 YEARS

The Liver Bird stands out proudly from the wall of the Main Stand. In what year was it incorporated into the LFC crest: (a) 1901 (b) 1931 or (c) 1951?

Answer page 98



Family Park entertainment and the best LFC social-media posts

LIVERPOOL

It's early days yet but if this local lad keeps his head and works hard down he's got the skills to go all the way





BOW WOW!

Introducing Liverpool's new little magician: Sam the Patterdale terrier, whom many Reds supporters may have seen outside Anfield before matchdays practising his skills.

Sam is seven and from Stockbridge Village, and owner Robb Lloyd often takes him for a pre-match kick-about wearing an LFC kit – any one from around 15 strips he now owns – plus an official New Balance ball.

Robb reveals: "He's always loved playing with a ball. If it's just a cheap dog-toy he'll pop them with his teeth, but if it's a proper New Balance LFC one, he doesn't use his teeth – he nudges it around with his nose!"

Reds ON INSTAGRAM

The best Liverpool FC-related posts, featuring Virgil, Mo and co!



@carrasnyc Mo Salah Memorialized #LFC #MoSalah



@mosalah22 Very proud to have won this prestigious award for best African player, and joining the ranks of many great players who won it before me.



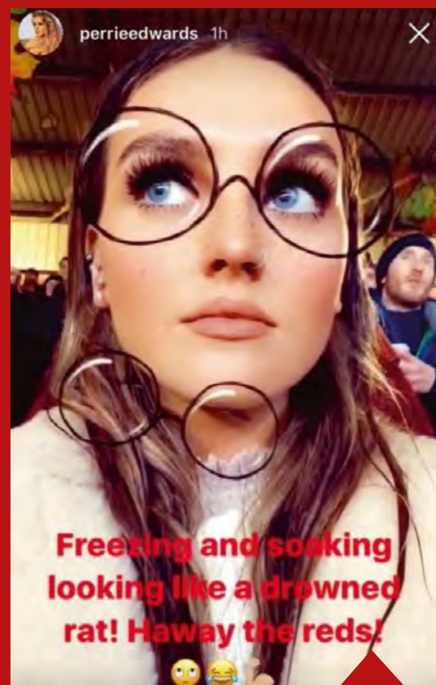
@luchogarcia14 NOT every day you have the chance of scoring in one of the 10.000 Doors at the Fushimi Inari in Kyoto. I did 😌 ‼ #fushimiinari #Kyoto #Japan



@virgilvandijk Delighted and honoured to have agreed to become a LiverpoolFC player! 🔴🔴🔴 Today is a proud day for me and my family as i join one of the biggest clubs in world football!



@liverpoolfc GET IN! 🙌

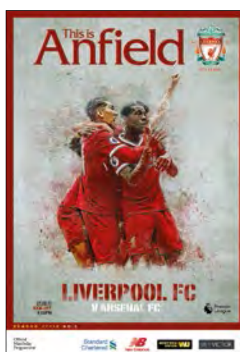


@perrieedwards

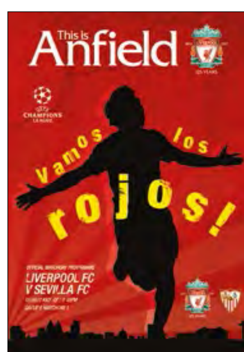
GET WITH THE PROGRAMME

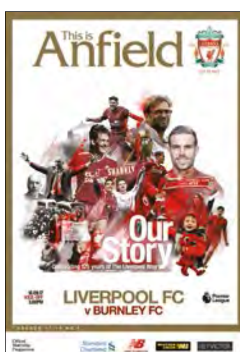


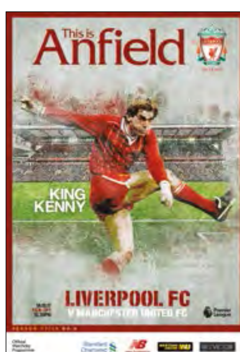








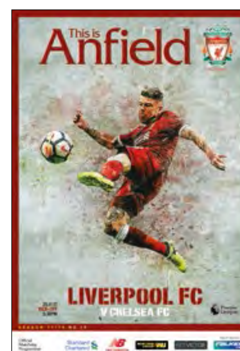




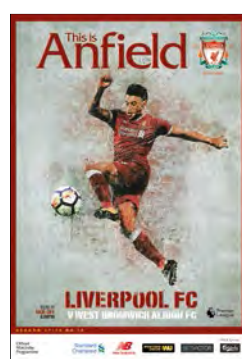


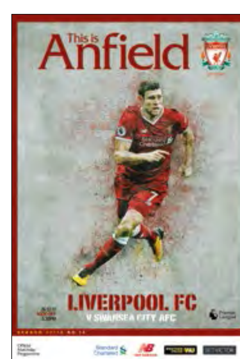


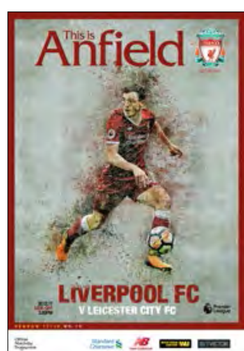
















This season's LFC matchday programme has proved a big hit with fans, not least for its 'street art' style covers for Premier League fixtures. There have been some eye-catching special issues, too: the programmes for Champions League group games were a larger A4 format with covers designed to reflect the occasion and the opposition; there were also commemorative covers for the anniversary of Liverpool FC's first-ever match, the unveiling of the Dream Scene artwork celebrating 125 years of LFC, and the recent Merseyside derby FA Cup third-round tie. Issues are available to purchase from **sportmediashop.com**.

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WHAT'S



ON: JAN

BAGGIES CUP CLASH

Liverpool's reward for defeating neighbours Everton in the third round of the Emirates FA Cup is another home tie against Premier League rivals. This time it's West Bromwich Albion, who return to L4 on the weekend of 26-29 January with Liverpool looking to break down a resilient Baggies defence which kept their attack at bay during a goalless league clash at Anfield in December.

It will be the first meeting of the clubs in the competition in almost 50 years, Back in 1968 it was Albion who prevailed in a quarter-final epic, winning a second replay at Maine Road after games at The Hawthorns and Anfield had ended all-square.

Jürgen Klopp's men also face two weekday away games in the Premier League. They visit Swansea City on the evening of Monday 22 January before making the trip to Huddersfield on Tuesday 30 January. Both games kick-off at 8pm.

There's more knockout action at Under-18 level as the Reds host Arsenal in the fourth round of the FA Youth Cup at Anfield on Saturday 20 January.

Kick-off will be at 3pm as Steven Gerrard's side get the chance to play in front of a Kop open for the fixture with tickets priced at just £3 for adults and £1 for juniors, young adults and over-65s. Season-ticket holders and LFC Official Members can gain admission free-of-charge but need to secure their ticket in advance online.

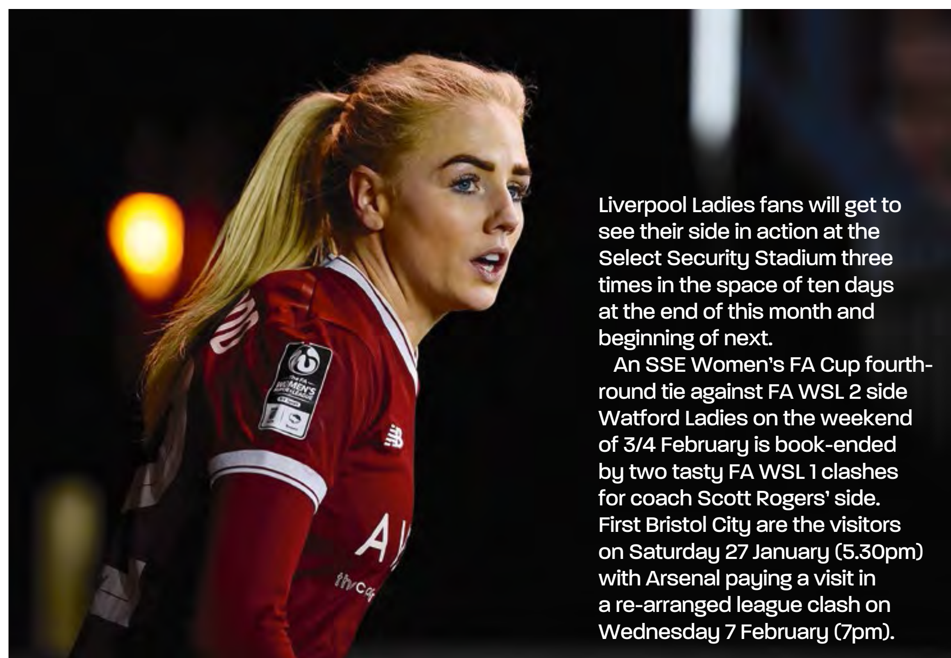
Disabled and ambulant tickets can be purchased from the ticket office or by calling 0151 264 2500.





WHAT'S ON: JAN

GET DOWN TO WIDNES



Liverpool Ladies fans will get to see their side in action at the Select Security Stadium three times in the space of ten days at the end of this month and beginning of next.

An SSE Women's FA Cup fourth-round tie against FA WSL 2 side Watford Ladies on the weekend of 3/4 February is book-ended by two tasty FA WSL 1 clashes for coach Scott Rogers' side. First Bristol City are the visitors on Saturday 27 January (5.30pm) with Arsenal paying a visit in a re-arranged league clash on Wednesday 7 February (7pm).

Anniversaries and birthdays

It's 21 years since Jamie Carragher scored his first goal for the Reds on 18 January 1997.

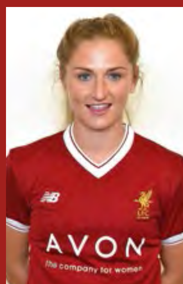
Carra turns 40 at the end of the month and it's hard to believe it's now over two decades since he made a dramatic full debut against Aston Villa. A fortnight before his 19th birthday, he was picked to start by Roy Evans for the Premier League fixture at Anfield.

He later recalled: "I knew the night before [I was playing]. I was down to play at centre-half but Bjorn Kvarme's clearance [to play having signed for LFC] came through before 5pm that night but I didn't realise. I wouldn't have been playing only that Patrik Berger was sick, so there was a place and I was moved into midfield. I was a bit nervous but it was more excitement really. I got booked after 20 seconds – that calmed me down!"

Jamie marked the occasion by opening the scoring in the 50th minute with a goal in front of the Kop, powering home a header from Stig Inge Bjornebye's corner to put the Reds on course for a 3-0 victory.



Danny Ward **25** on 22 January
Phil Thompson **64** on 21 January
Jamie Carragher **40** on 28 January
Lucas Leiva **31** on 9 January
Peter Beardsley **57** on 18 January
Peter Crouch **37** on 30 January
Brendan Rodgers **45** on 26 January
Laura Coombs **27** on 29 January
Ray Houghton **56** on 9 January
Emre Can **24** on 12 January
Alvaro Arbeloa **35** on 17 January



10 years since Martin Skrtel signed for Liverpool FC on 11 January 2008.
31 years since John Aldridge joined the Reds on 27 January 1987.
40 years since Graeme Souness made his debut on 14 January 1978.
10 years since Lucas scored his first LFC goal on 26 January 2008.
63 years since Second Division Liverpool won 4-0 at Everton in the FA Cup on 29 January 1955.

FIXTURES 2017/18

AUGUST

Sat 12	Watford (A)	3-3
Tue 15	Hoffenheim (A) UCL	2-1
Sat 19	Crystal Palace (H)	1-0
Wed 23	Hoffenheim (H) UCL	4-2
Sun 27	Arsenal (H)	4-0

SEPTEMBER

Sat 9	Manchester City (A)	0-5
Wed 13	Sevilla (H) UCL	2-2
Sat 16	Burnley (H)	1-1
Tue 19	Leicester City (A) CC3	0-2
Sat 23	Leicester City (A)	3-2
Tue 26	Spartak Moscow (A) UCL	1-1

OCTOBER

Sun 1	Newcastle United (A)	1-1
Sat 14	Manchester United (H)	0-0
Tue 17	Maribor (A) UCL	7-0
Sun 22	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	1-4
Sat 28	Huddersfield Town (H)	3-0

NOVEMBER

Wed 1	Maribor (H) UCL	3-0
Sat 4	West Ham United (A)	4-1
Sat 18	Southampton (H)	3-0
Tue 21	Sevilla (A) UCL	3-3
Sat 25	Chelsea (H)	1-1
Wed 29	Stoke City (A)	3-0

DECEMBER

Sat 2	Brighton (A)	5-1
Wed 6	Spartak Moscow (H) UCL	7-0
Sun 10	Everton (H)	1-1
Wed 13	West Brom (H)	0-0
Sun 17	AFC Bournemouth (A)	4-0
Fri 22	Arsenal (A)	2-2
Tue 26	Swansea City (H)	5-0
Sat 30	Leicester City (H)	2-1

JANUARY

Mon 1	Burnley (A)	1-0
Fri 5	Everton (H, FAC 3)	2-1
Sun 14	Manchester City (H)	
Mon 22	Swansea City (A)	
Sa 27/Su 28	West Brom (H, FAC 4)	
Tue 30	Huddersfield Town (A)	

FEBRUARY

Sun 4	Tottenham (H)	
Sun 11	Southampton (A)	
Wed 14	Porto (A) UCL	
Sa 17/Su 18	FA Cup 5th round (TBC)	
Sat 24	West Ham United (H)	

MARCH

Sat 3	Newcastle United (H)	
Tue 6	FC Porto (H) UCL	
Sat 10	Manchester United (A)	
Sat 17	FA Cup 6th round (TBC)	
Sat 17	Watford (H)	
Sat 31	Crystal Palace (A)	

APRIL

Tu 3/We 4	UCL quarter-final 1st leg	
Sat 7	Everton (A)	
Tu 10/We 11	UCL quarter-final 2nd leg	
Sat 14	AFC Bournemouth (H)	
Sat 21	West Brom (A)	
Sa 21/Su 22	FA Cup semi-final (TBC)	
Tu 24/We 25	UCL semi-final 1st leg	
Sat 28	Stoke City (H)	

MAY

Tu 1/We 2	UCL semi-final 2nd leg	
Sat 5	Chelsea (A)	
Sun 13	Brighton (H)	
Sat 19	FA Cup final (TBC)	
Sat 26	UCL final (Kiev)	

*UCL = UEFA Champions League



Ladies



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Virgil van Dijk models the home kit after his arrival from Southampton. Who was the last man to sign for the Reds on a permanent basis in January?

Answer on page 98

Virgil, Gini, Ragnar and Bobby talk football plus in-depth analysis

FOOTBALL

TOP PLAYERS HAVE TO BE INTELLIGENT, TACTICALLY VERY ASTUTE AND KEEN TO LEARN





MAXIMUM BOB

Roberto Firmino says that his multi-faceted role for the Reds results from his football upbringing



Roberto Firmino's work ethic has won plenty of plaudits since his 2015 move from Hoffenheim and the no9 attributes that mentality to his experiences in youth football back in Brazil.

Even in an era when shadow strikers and false nines are so popular, Bobby is not typical of many of the wearers of the jersey. While he weighs in with his fair share of goals – 16 in 27 games up to and including the 5-0 win over Swansea City on Boxing Day – it is a combination of his close-control, link-play, work-rate and desire to improve that have helped him make such a quick impression in the Premier League.

He believes his background playing football in his homeland with Clube de Regatas Brasil (or more simply CRB) and Figueirense as a youngster has helped in that respect.

"In my youth teams I wasn't an attacker," he explains. "I was a defensive midfielder to start with, then as a junior footballer I went into my country's Division B, played as a midfielder and started playing well.

"I also played at centre-back and right-back, so that's where my versatility comes from. I feel that I can adapt well. Now I'm an attacker so from my point-of-view that's great."

While another no9, Ian Rush, was often the trigger-point for the forward-press in the great Liverpool teams of the 1980s, so Firmino enjoys that responsibility in the current line-up. "It's a pleasure. I love to do that, to pressure the opposition to make life difficult for them and to try to steal the ball and score. Making tackles is something I find quite natural, too, and I think that also comes from youth football. I enjoy helping to mark players.

"I'd describe myself as a fighter and hopefully intelligent, too. I never stop running, I don't like to stop.

"Playing without the ball is very important. The top player has to be intelligent, tactically very astute and has to want to learn so that he can get better. That way he can help the team and be successful and hopefully manage to stay at the top."


Welcome to M
4
L.F.C.
125 YEARS
1892
2017
BETVICTOR

I'LL GIVE EVERYTHING I'VE GOT FOR LIVERPOOL

Record signing Virgil van Dijk on how his dream move to Anfield came true, and what happens next...



Virgil, firstly, welcome to Liverpool Football Club...
Thank you very much.

How does it feel to have signed for Liverpool?
Well, fantastic obviously. I am happy to be here and I can't wait to get started.

Why are Liverpool the right club for you, what attracted you to the club?
I think the most important thing is the size of the club, the culture of the club, the players, the manager and obviously the fans, who make the club this special. With the history at the club and everything around it – even the training ground and stuff – it is just a perfect, perfect match for me, and for my family as well.

How important a factor was the opportunity to work with Jürgen Klopp at Liverpool in your decision?
Everybody obviously from a Liverpool perspective knows how he is; how lively he is, how he can make players better and give them confidence as well. It just suits me as well. I think he can make me a better player and I am just looking forward to working with him.

He said in the press this deal "just feels right" – would you agree with that sentiment?
I have the same feeling. Obviously there is a lot of money being paid, but I can't do anything about that money, I can't do anything about the price – nobody can. It's only the market. The only thing I can do is just work hard, do the good things and be 100 per cent every day. That's what I definitely want to do – and I am going to do.

How would you describe yourself as a defender?
I am vocal, I am obviously pretty tall, I like to command the defensive line and have the ball as well. I like to play out from the back and be comfortable on the ball. Obviously there is a lot of improvement still to come, but I think the manager can help me with that.

You talk of improvement; you are only 26 so there is plenty of time for you to develop further...
Yes, hopefully. I think this is the right time for me to be here and to develop all sorts of aspects of my game. I am looking forward to doing that, that's the main thing.

Interview: James Carroll



"It's a new start for him but he can make us better"

Roberto Firmino: "He's a really, really good defender. It's always been hard playing against him: he marks very tightly and he's a high-quality player. Like everybody else who comes in, they add something to the group and I hope that he can bring something to the team himself. I'm really looking forward to playing alongside him."

Joe Gomez: "For me, it's someone else I can learn from. He is an experienced defender with a lot of quality. It's another person for me to develop and learn from, the same as I have with Joel, Dejan, Raggy and so on. It's nice to have someone else to try to help you develop. And for the team obviously it is another massive signing."

Georginio Wijnaldum: "He's not only my team-mate now but also a friend. I've played together with him for the national team. I'm happy that he's here, now I'm not the only Dutch player! It's going to be a new start for him – he has to show it at a new club. That's not easy but he is capable of showing he'll make us better."


Touchdown at JLA


Catching a lift to Melwood



Kitted out already


First interview with LFCTV

VIRGIL'S VLOG


Re-suited and booted



En route to Anfield


Got to be done!


Meeting James Milner and co


"Anywhere here's fine, mate..."

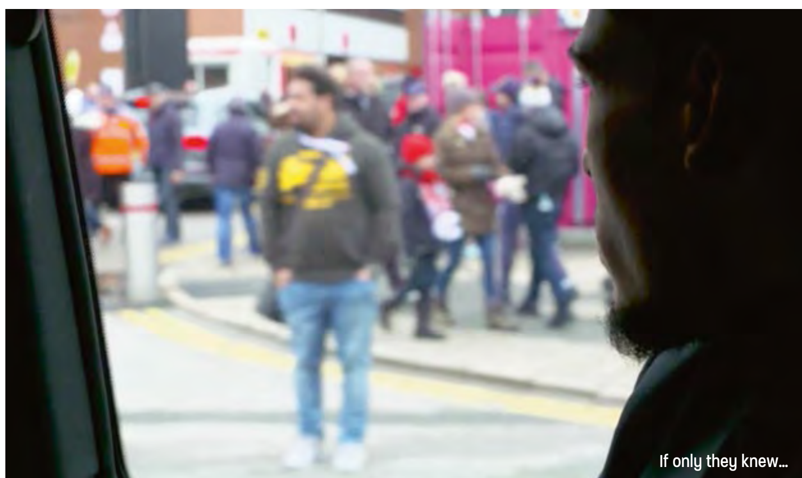


The sign says it all


Who da man?


Back in the changing rooms

The new boy's first day with Liverpool FC frame by frame


If only they knew...


Players' entrance, Main Stand...


So, here we are...


Just can't wait!

You've played at Anfield twice before as a visitor – how will it feel to line up here in red?
I think something special. I think Anfield is a very special stadium and it is my home right now as well. I am just looking forward to being on the pitch, especially as a [home] player at the stadium. It's going to be nice, especially the evening games and the European nights.

Anfield on a Champions League night is a pretty special place – how much are you looking forward to playing in that competition?
Yes, a lot. Obviously I have played in the Champions League with Celtic and that was very special as well. Liverpool is up there as well with the atmosphere and the fans. I am just looking forward to everything! Everything is perfect: the stadium, the training ground, the facilities and the people who work at the club, the people and the city, the fans. It is just the perfect place for me to be, and for my family to be as well.



Playing against Liverpool in last season's EFL Cup semis

A lot has been said about Liverpool's attacking talent – how pleased are you to no longer face them as rivals?
Yeah, very happy! With Southampton we saw it with our own eyes [in November]. There is a lot of quality upfront. I think the whole team is full of quality. They've been showing it already throughout the season.

How impressed have you been with Liverpool's development under Jürgen?
A lot. Since he's come in, I think he has made a lot of progress until now and I think it is only hopefully going to get better and better. Hopefully I can contribute to that as well and keep working hard.

You've taken the no4 jersey – was there any particular reason you wanted that one?
I had no4 when I played for Groningen back in Holland, so I was always a big fan of no4 anyway. Unfortunately at Southampton, my good friend Jordy Clasie had no4 so I didn't want to take it from him! I just like no4. Obviously here, Sami Hyypia had it here as well and played for my team where I played ten years in Holland, Willem II, so it's a bit special.

You've signed a long-term deal with the club – what do you hope to achieve over the course of that contract?
To win trophies. Every player wants to win trophies and, with the squad we have and the progress the club is making, I think we are very close to it. Obviously we still need to do it. We will see what the future brings.

More immediately, when do you hope to be ready to challenge for a place in the team?
I feel ready. Obviously I didn't play the last two games for Southampton, but I feel ready. I am looking forward to getting stuck in, make sure I get my chance and just play.

Finally, for the Liverpool fans reading this, what would your message to them be?
I am going to work hard every game, every day. I am going to give my everything, try to keep clean-sheets and hopefully try and be a threat in front of goal as well. I think the main thing is just to organise, try to keep clean-sheets. I will give everything that I've got in every game.


Training with his new team-mates

VAN DIJK
THE CELTIC YEARS




THE CELTIC FOOTBALL CLUB
1888


Scoring from a set-piece

You never quite know how well players who shine in the Dutch leagues will get on in British football. Those with Eredivisie promise and pedigree can transfer their form to the faster and more physical British game while others sometimes find it tough to live up to their billing.

But both Liverpool and Celtic have had their fair share of success signing players from the Netherlands. Midfielder Bobby Petta and striker Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink had done well for the Glasgow club in both the SPL and Champions League but were never quite as valuable to the cause as Van Dijk in his two-and-a-bit seasons at the place they call 'Paradise'.

Arguably Neil Lennon's best Celtic signing as manager – he also recruited and developed Fraser Forster and Victor Wanyama, who would similarly leave for Southampton at a tidy profit – Van Dijk arrived from Groningen in the summer of 2013 for £2.6million with a reputation as a cool, unflustered ball-playing defender and he didn't disappoint.

Playing more than 100 times in his two full seasons, he won the Scottish Premiership at a canter in his debut campaign, with one highlight his dribble from his own half past five St Johnstone players, finishing into the corner from the edge of the area.

A taste of what will hopefully be a regular occurrence at Anfield also came via some stellar clashes at Europe's top table. After a Liverpool-style comeback in the tournament's play-off round, Celtic were drawn in a group alongside Barcelona, AC Milan and Ajax (16 European Cups between them at the time). It would prove to be the only season the Hoops would qualify for the Champions League proper in Virgil's time at Parkhead.

Often skippering the side in the absence of long-serving Scott Brown, he took his game to another level in 2014/15. His dead-ball prowess and threat from set-plays helped him to double-figures in his second season in which he won both the league title and League Cup under new manager (and Liverpool fan) Ronny Deila.

And so, following a disappointing exit from the qualifying rounds of the Champions League, it was Southampton – then managed by Ronald Koeman – who looked to Celtic Park again to strengthen the spine of their team, getting their man towards the end of the summer window.


Title winner 2015

"I know I can hit a free-kick – it's all about confidence"

Early years: "I was born and raised in Breda, a small city in the south and I played for Willem II for ten years. Groningen came looking at me and wanted to give me a contract, so I took that. That's when it really started for me. I was 18 at the time and it was all new to me, especially because I'd gone from the south to the north.

"I originally started my career at right back, that or centre-half, I never went in front. But I love to drive forward – everyone likes to get forward and join in with the attacking part of football."



Free-kicks: "I know I can hit a free-kick, it's all about confidence. With good technique and power you can hit a good free-kick. I have managed to do it [at Celtic] and I hope to continue with that. But I always have to keep improving. I only scored one free-kick in Holland but I always have had some power in my shooting."

Defensive opposition: "I didn't expect everyone [in Scotland] to be counter-attacking this much. Celtic are the biggest club here and everybody drops back. I don't know if it makes my job harder or easier as a defender, but it makes it different and I have to get used to it and adapt."

Back-chat: "I always talk a lot during the games. I have the voice for it and I play in a position where you need to do it."

Football idol: "Ronaldinho. When he was at Barcelona he was the best in the world. He's my idol and always will be. He's always happy when he's playing football and that is the most important thing.

"I was always a defender, but on the streets I was an attacker. I always enjoyed going forward and scoring when I was playing with my friends from school. I would always try to do things that Ronaldinho did."

Why 'Virgil' on his shirt: "My family name is different than Van Dijk, which is my father's name. But I don't have contact with my father so that is the main reason."

■ Quotes from interviews conducted with the *Celtic View* magazine.

Words: Michael McGuinness

SEPT 1946 Albert Stubbins from Newcastle United £12,500
A prolific Magpies scorer, Albert quickly became a popular figure at Liverpool. He'd scored an incredible 232 goals in 190 games in wartime football for Newcastle then netted 83 in 178 appearances during a six-and-a-half year spell with the Reds under the management of George Kay then Don Welsh. His later claim to fame was an appearance on the front cover of The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album, the only footballer given that honour.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Virgil van Dijk's arrival at LFC represents the 28th occasion upon which the club's post-war transfer record has been broken – here's the timeline and the men who made it happen





JUNE 1960 Kevin Lewis from Sheffeld United £13,000
The Ellesmere Port-born winger (above left in photo) was one of Bill Shankly's early signings and at first kept Ian Callaghan out of the side. The wide-man scored 22 goals in 36 games in his first season and is best known for getting the goals against Southampton that helped seal the club's promotion back to the big time in 1962. After netting an eventual 44 in 82 matches, he lost his place to Peter Thompson and played his last game for the Reds in April 1963.

AUG 1960 Gordon Milne from Preston North End £16,000
A shrewd Shankly signing who was a fixture on the right side of the Liverpool midfield for seven years following his arrival from Preston North End. He won two championship medals with the Reds but missed out on a place in the team that famously won the FA Cup in 1965.





MAY 1961 Ian St John from Motherwell £37,500
Shanks was never afraid to make a bold transfer swoop and his move to bring Ian to the club paid off handsomely. Talking about his wish to sign St John and Ron Yeats, the boss famously told LFC directors that the club couldn't afford not to bring them to Anfield. With 118 goals in 425 games and a haul of medals in almost a decade, the Saint proved a bargain.

AUG 1963 Peter Thompson from Preston North End £40,000
A former schoolboy star, Peter (far-right colour photo) was pursued by a string of suitors after breaking into the PNE first-team aged 17. A winger who tormented opposing full-backs, he went on to play 416 matches for Liverpool, netting 54 goals.



NOV 1964 Geoff Strong from Arsenal £40,000
The £40,000 paid to snap up Peter Thompson was matched to bring Geoff (left with Shanks) from Arsenal. His versatility proved a boon to the Reds and he was deployed in several positions during a Liverpool career that saw him make more than 200 appearances for the club.



FEB 1967 Emlyn Hughes from Blackpool £65,000
Bill Shankly's legendary natural enthusiasm almost bubbled over when he agreed terms with Blackpool to bring 'Crazy Horse' to the club in the early part of 1967, as part of his plans to build a second great team. Emlyn stayed with the Reds for a dozen years, playing in midfield and defence and going on to be a great captain during a career which saw him play 665 games and win four league titles, the FA Cup, two UEFA Cups and two European Cups.

SEPT 1968 Alun Evans from Wolves £100,000
Little more than a year after Hateley's arrival, Alun (below) *did* become Liverpool's first six-figure signing. He was 19 when he made the move from Wolves and, at the time, the fee was a British record for a teenager. He never fulfilled his potential but enjoyed some good moments such as a spectacular hat-trick against Bayern Munich in the Fairs Cup during the 1970/71 season, a campaign which saw him net 15 in 34 games.



JUNE 1967 Tony Hateley from Chelsea £96,000
The powerful centre-forward came within £4,000 of becoming Liverpool's first six-figure transfer when he joined from Chelsea. Although he averaged a goal every two games for the Reds, he only stayed at Anfield for a year before moving on to Coventry City as Shankly decided to look at other options.

NOV 1970 John Toshack from Cardiff City £110,000
Tosh (left) became a towering presence in the Liverpool attack following his record-breaking move from Cardiff City. His little-and-large partnership with Kevin Keegan was one of the best forward link-ups of the era and the pair appeared to have an almost telepathic understanding. In a seven-year stay at Anfield, the Welshman scored 96 goals in 246 appearances and won a host of domestic and European honours.



JULY 1972 Peter Cormack from Nott'm Forest £110,000
The Tosh fee was matched in the summer of 1972 when Shankly made his move for one of the best goalscoring midfielders in the country. Peter helped the team enjoy plenty of success in a three-year spell but after losing his place to Ray Kennedy he opted to move on to Bristol City.



JULY 1974 Ray Kennedy from Arsenal £180,000
Famously signed on the day that Shankly shocked the football world by announcing his decision to stand down as Reds manager, Ray arrived from Arsenal as a centre-forward. Bob Paisley saw something else in him and converted him into a midfielder midway through the 1975/76 season and he became one of the best in the country. Hugely influential, he figured in many of the club's triumphs in the late Seventies and early Eighties.

AUG 1977 Kenny Dalglish from Celtic £440,000
The best piece of business Liverpool FC have ever conducted? There was actually plenty of despair around when Kevin Keegan departed for Hamburg. But not for long. Kenny's arrival from Celtic in the summer of 1977 would prove a moment that re-wrote Reds history. Viewed by many to be the best player to represent the club, he also managed the club to many glories in two spells and of course had a stand named in his honour at Anfield last year.

APR 1981 Craig Johnston from Middlesbrough £650,000
Liverpool took something of a gamble when they signed Johnston, aged just 20, from Middlesbrough for a large fee. But it proved a good deal as the South African-born Aussie gradually established himself as a key component in the team of the Eighties. An all-action player with boundless energy, he made a crucial impact during the historic 1985/86 double-winning season during which he played 61 times.



AUG 1976 David Johnson from Ipswich Town £200,000
A somewhat controversial signing, having started his career across Stanley Park, but it looked to be good business when the Reds broke their transfer record to bring David in from Ipswich. He went on to form a good partnership with Kenny Dalglish and scored 27 goals in the 1979/80 season. He averaged better than a goal every three games in his 213 appearances but the emergence of Ian Rush limited his opportunities and he returned to Everton in 1982.







AUG 1981 Mark Lawrenson from Brighton £900,000
Liverpool had been in the market for this accomplished defender before he joined Brighton from Preston in 1977. After Lawro continued to impress at the Goldstone Ground, Reds boss Bob Paisley sanctioned a big-money move for the Republic of Ireland international. His partnership with Alan Hansen was the defensive axis on which so many of the glories of the 1980s were built.



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JULY 1991 Dean Saunders from Derby County £2.9m
Graeme Souness made Welsh striker Dean (both pictured left) the club's record buy when he swooped to sign him alongside Mark Wright from Derby in the summer of 1991. In the event his stay lasted barely longer than a year despite a reasonable return of 25 goals in 61 matches.

SEPT 1994 Phil Babb from Coventry City £3.6m
Phil was signed on the back of an excellent World Cup for the Republic of Ireland at USA 94. He became Britain's most expensive defender when Roy Evans brought him to Anfield to link up with John Scales. He made 170 appearances in a stay of almost five years but never completely convinced and after a loan spell at Tranmere Rovers he moved on to Sporting Lisbon in 2000.

JULY 1987 Peter Beardsley from Newcastle United £1.9m
The club's first million-pound player, Peter linked midfield and attack and formed a fine understanding with John Barnes and John Aldridge, who joined the club around the same time. The Geordie became a popular figure with Reds fans in his four-season stay at Anfield and played his part in two memorable title triumphs.

AUG 1988 Ian Rush from Juventus £2.8m
The return of Rushie captivated the attention of supporters like few signings have ever managed to do. Just a year after joining Juventus for £3.2 million, the prolific marksman pulled on a red shirt once again. In his second spell at the club he continued to find the net, winning a league title, two FA Cups and a League Cup.







JULY 1995 Stan Collymore from Nottingham Forest £8.5m
Roy Evans fought off competition from a host of rivals to sign Collymore for a British-record fee after he'd shone for Forest. He formed an exciting forward partnership with Robbie Fowler and the pair flourished for a couple of seasons, netting more than 100 goals between them. On his day Stan was unstoppable but those days did not come often enough. His relationship with manager Evans also had its difficulties and he left for Aston Villa after two seasons.



MAR 2000 Emile Heskey from Leicester City £11m
Alongside Robbie Fowler and Michael Owen he formed part of a formidable strike-force at Anfield. Manager Gerard Houllier was a big admirer and Emile's arrival added pace and power to the attack. He ended his first full season by helping the Reds to a famous cup treble, although his scoring record was never quite as good as it had been at Leicester – he averaged marginally better than a goal every four games in his 223 appearances.

JULY 2004 Djibril Cisse from Auxerre £14.2m
Gerard Houllier had agreed a deal for the flamboyant French forward to arrive in the close-season of 2004. But when Rafael Benitez took over as manager that summer there was uncertainty as to whether he was as big a fan of the player. Djibril moved on after two seasons but enjoyed some notable successes during his time with the Reds, winning the Champions League in 2005 and scoring a vital goal as the team won the FA Cup the following May.



JULY 2007 Fernando Torres from Atletico Madrid £20.2m
The Reds smashed their record fee when *El Nino*, who already enjoyed a reputation as one of the best strikers in Europe, came to Anfield. During his time here he won the European Championship with Spain and later became a World Cup-winner. His strike-rate for the club was as good as they come and he scored more goals (63) in his first 100 top-flight games for LFC than any other player.

JAN 2011 Luis Suarez from Ajax £22.7m
The Uruguayan international proved an absolute steal, going on to become one of Liverpool's all-time best strikers after being brought in by Kenny Dalglish. An enthralling attacker who possessed a sublime repertoire of skills, he scored 82 goals in 133 games during a three-and-a-half year spell before earning a then-club-record fee of £65 million when sold to Barcelona in the summer of 2014.



JAN 2011 Andy Carroll from Newcastle United £35m
With Torres off to Chelsea, the Reds splashed out on a replacement no9. In doing so they acquired one of the brightest prospects in the Premier League. Strong in the air with a powerful shot, Carroll had been tipped by many to become a huge favourite at Anfield. However, apart from occasional glimpses, the big Geordie struggled to fulfil his promise and was sold by Brendan Rodgers.

AUG 2017 Naby Keita from RB Leipzig £48m
His midfield displays last season helped Leipzig to the Champions League group stages in 2017/18. The Reds announced a deal to sign the Guinea international on the proviso he stayed with the Bundesliga side till the summer. [Mo Salah's fee from Roma to LFC was reported by the BBC to be £34m, so not quite breaking the club record at the time].



■ **All fees reported by media sources at time of transfers**

SIXTEEN TO ONE

Can the Reds go all the way in the Champions League? If the stars align, says midfield ace Gini Wijnaldum, then why not?




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IF YOU DON'T DREAM YOU WILL NEVER SUCCEED – IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE THAT WE COULD WIN IT

Cast your mind back to May 2017 and the final game of Gini Wijnaldum's first season as a Liverpool player.

The Reds needed to beat Middlesbrough at Anfield to secure a top-four finish and Champions League qualification, but as half-time approached Jürgen Klopp's side found themselves in fifth position with rivals Manchester City and Arsenal both winning.

Cometh the hour – well the 45th minute – cometh the Dutchman. Running on to a clever Roberto Firmino pass, Wijnaldum took the ball in his stride and thumped home a rising drive in front of the Kop to put Liverpool 1-0 up. Philippe Coutinho and Adam Lallana added goals after the break, but it was Wijnaldum's strike that effectively ensured Liverpool would be playing Champions League football again, give or take an August qualifier, for the first time since 2014.

"One minute before half-time I scored and there was relief for everyone!" smiles the affable Dutch international as we chat at Melwood, sitting in reception around 12 foot away from the glass-case-enclosed European Cup that Liverpool won in Istanbul.

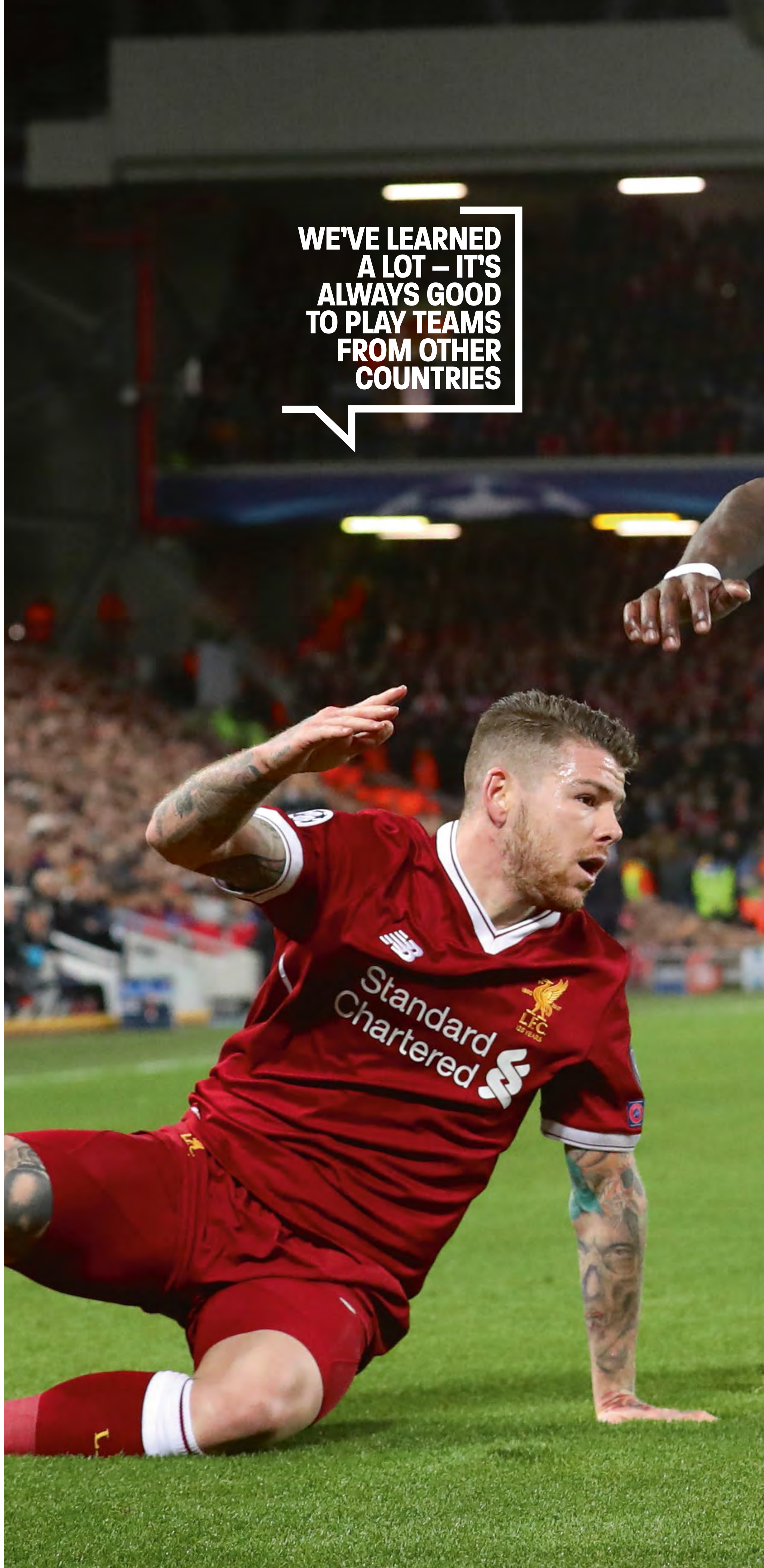
"We could feel it! Everyone was stressed and nervous – not only the supporters but on the pitch – because we hadn't created many big chances. But then I scored that goal out of nowhere. Because of the moment we were in, it makes it the most beautiful goal for me."

After 1899 Hoffenheim were dispatched in the qualifying round Liverpool took on Sevilla, Spartak Moscow and NK Maribor in the group stages and that meant Wijnaldum had finally appeared in the Champions League, having previously played four qualifying games for PSV Eindhoven in 2013 only to be knocked out by AC Milan.

Indeed Gini, along with Firmino, Mo Salah, Emre Can and Alberto Moreno, has played in all eight of Liverpool's European games this season, so I enquire as to how much he has enjoyed his first taste of Champions League football in the famous red shirt?

"A lot," he smiles. "We were first in the group and we didn't lose a game so yeah, it went well. We played some games where we scored a lot of goals and we played some games where we gave the win away so we have learned a lot from it.

"Its always good to play European games and meet with teams and players from other countries to learn more and get a better team. So far it has worked out for us and I hope it is going to work until the end for us!"



WE'VE LEARNED A LOT – IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO PLAY TEAMS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES


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5


L.F.C.



Gini and co before the Maribor home game

Every Kopite knows that European nights feel different to Premier League games. There's a different vibe in the air, a different type of atmosphere, a different sense of occasion.

Thoughts of past successes – the pride of winning a British-record five European Cups – never leaves the psyche of Liverpudlians with the desperation for future triumphs to follow a driving force among the Anfield congregation.

Wijnaldum has also felt the different vibe Champions League nights have at Anfield and says the three away games were new experiences for him too. "The style of football is different – Sevilla were a really good team and they showed that against us when they came from 3-0 behind – but there was also something different with the fans in Sevilla. They never stopped supporting the team even when they were 3-0 down. That was something that was quite new for me.

"Also, Maribor surprised me quite a lot. They were a team that was always trying to play football, even against a better a team. Then there was the atmosphere at Spartak Moscow which was unbelievable. Their fans were unbelievable, but also seeing so many Liverpool fans travel so far to be at our games in a place like Moscow is something that you don't see often."

ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN AGAINST PORTO BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN A WORSE DRAW FOR US

FC Porto are up next in the last 16 with the Reds visiting Estadio do Dragao on 14 February before the Anfield return on 6 March. The general consensus is that while the 27-times Portuguese title winners and twice European Champions shouldn't be underestimated, being paired with them represents a good draw for Liverpool. Gini agrees.

"Yeah, I think it is a good draw. Other teams got a much more difficult draw but we also know this is the Champions League and it will be decided over two matches. It's not like we're playing Porto over the whole season and in two matches anything can happen.

"We could have a bad day and Porto are the best team, but we could have good days and win both games. Anything can happen so I don't think the draw is so important, but it could have been worse.

"We just have to be focused on the two games and that would be the same whoever we were playing."

Liverpool are – in my opinion anyway – dark horses to go all the way to the Champions League final in Kiev this season. It's a bullish claim given the quality of opposition left in the tournament, but my theory is that Klopp's Liverpool are such an attacking threat away from Anfield that they've got the away goals in them to get some big results on the continent even if visiting teams get something at Anfield.

Whether that changes with the departure of Coutinho to Barcelona remains to be seen, but Liverpool scored 11 goals in three away group games in 2017 having inflicted 1899 Hoffenheim's first home defeat for over a year. To put that goalscoring into perspective, when Liverpool won the Champions League in 2004/05 Rafa Benitez's side scored just one away goal in three group games – and that was an own-goal by Deportivo La Coruña's Jorge Andrade – and only three goals (all away to Bayer Leverkusen) in the knockout stages en route to Istanbul.

So I put it to Wijnaldum that Champions League knockout football could suit this Liverpool side because

of their ability to score on their travels. He takes the point but responds cautiously.

"It's difficult to say it will [suit us] because every game is a different game. Both games against Porto could be totally different. They might be bad in the first game and better in the second, so you can never tell before what might happen in those games.

"It's always a good thing to score away goals, but you never know when you are going to have a bad game and not score an away-goal. Then you have to make sure you score at home and stop the other team from scoring away goals. We have to be prepared for everything against Porto."

As group winners Liverpool get the perceived advantage of playing the second leg at Anfield, where they have lost only two of the last 32 in European competition, although Wijnaldum believes there is a case for arguing it's better to play at home first to try to get a tie a good as won.

"You can look at this two ways. You can say it is a good thing to go to their ground first because everyone thinks the away game is the more difficult game, so it is better to play it then have the less difficult game at home. But you can also say that if you start at home you can play well and finish it before the second game.

"It all depends how you look at things, but for me it doesn't matter. We still have to have a good result in two games to go to the next round wherever we play first."

The conversation moves on to the standard of Champions League football. On one hand, with clubs such as Real Madrid, Paris St Germain, Bayern Munich, Juventus and Barcelona mixing it with five Premier League clubs in the last 16, it appears to be as high a level as you can get. Conceivably better than international standard.

But then Liverpool won two of their group games 7-0 and progressed with Sevilla despite the Spaniards only winning twice, both at the Ramon Sanchez Pijzuan. Is the Champions League genuinely the best competition in club football?

"That's difficult to say as well," Gini replies after pondering the question momentarily. "The Premier League is already a really tough competition, the toughest in Europe and maybe in the world. Is the Champions League harder than the Premier League [blows out air with his cheeks]?

"The further you go, the better teams you will play, but in the Premier League what people say are the 'little' games are really difficult. Look at the game we played against Burnley on New Year's Day and how difficult it was for us to win that game.

"In the Champions League the further you go the tougher it gets because normally the better teams get through, but in the Premier League there are difficult games every week."

However you see the comparative standard, winning the Champions League is no easy task. The Reds are one of only three English clubs to have paraded the European Cup since the competition was rebranded and redesigned in 1992, but that won't stop Kopites from dreaming of a sixth success in 2018.

"You can always dream!" smiles Wijnaldum. "That is what I do also. If you don't dream you will never succeed. Of course you have to work hard to try to achieve your dreams, but whether you are a player or a supporter you always have to dream. It is always possible that we could win it.

"Like I just said, anything can happen over two legs, so I would say to the fans you should never, never stop dreaming. That is what they have to do as fans and what we have to do as a team and then help each other on the pitch to try to win games. Who knows, maybe we'll win something this season."

With the Reds also through to the FA Cup fourth round after a Merseyside derby victory at Anfield, the target of winning silverware remains achievable and it is the goal of collective success rather than individual accolades that Gini is striving for in 2018.

"A lot of players say 'I want to win this and that' and of course I want to win everything. But I also want to help the team to win everything. So I want to stay fit, play a lot of games and help the team achieve something.

"That is what I hope to achieve in 2018, but we need everyone in the team to perform well. We have got to do it better as a team. I think we already have a good base for this, but I also think we can get much, much better if we change and improve the small things.

"I hope we do that as a team because if we do I have a lot of confidence that Liverpool can win something in 2018."



A number six would be just lovely...

Words: Chris McLoughlin


WE HAVE A GOOD BASE BUT WE CAN GET MUCH BETTER IF WE IMPROVE THE SMALL THINGS
5

2018

LIVERPOOL CALENDAR



VIRGIL VAN DIJK

"From what I've seen over my first few days, this squad is a special group with a lot of quality, a lot of presence and a lot of personality. Everyone has welcomed me very well. I just want to improve and work hard for the team, the club and the fans every day."

JAN

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4



"In the two seconds or so where you have the opportunity to score a goal and then you put the ball in the net, it's an excitement...it's a buzz. That really is indescribable happiness. It is difficult to explain that feeling because you know that you have helped yourself and your team."

FEBRUARY

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	1	2	3	4



"It always helps to get Anfield behind us to push every one of us more. We have to set the tone and then I think the supporters really get behind us and push us on. They will do their work, we have to do our work and we work together well."

MARCH

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
26	27	28	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1



"I like the fact Jürgen is not pretending to be somebody. He is the character he is. That's him. In training we see it every day and I've never met a trainer like him. He really cares about football and the players and tries to make us better."

APRIL

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6



"Getting to 200 games is some achievement for me when you look back at the names who have played 200 games for this club. I'm sure the goalies who are in that list are big legends like Ray Clemence, Bruce Grobbelaar and Pepe Reina so to be among them is great."

MAY

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3



"Every striker really loves to only score goals so that the team wins. The win is always the most important thing. If you score two goals and the team doesn't win it makes no sense to be happy about this. We attack a lot in this team and can always score many goals."

JUNE

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1



"Liverpool were right for me because of many things. I used to play as Liverpool on the PlayStation on FIFA when I was 18, as Steven Gerrard, Sami Hyypia, Jamie Carragher, Michael Owen and Xabi Alonso. I also remembered that atmosphere and it came into my mind."

JULY

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5



"The World Cup is not something that is an immediate focus for me, if I'm being honest. My main focus is on Liverpool only. If I can play well for my club the opportunity with England will come, but to do that I've got to focus everything on Liverpool. It's all I want to do."

AUGUST

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

ANDY ROBERTSON



"You think of Kenny Dalglish, Alan Hansen, Graeme Souness and, more recently, Gary McAllister. Players like that have all left their impression at this club. It's good to have the Scottish link to the club and it's one that I hope to continue for many years."

SEPTEMBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

ALEX OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN



"Liverpool has got its differences to London. Liverpool is a lot smaller and it is more intense. There are older ladies in London who wouldn't know about football but here they live and breathe it! Everyone really cares about the club and the players – the support is amazing."

OCTOBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4



"Jürgen Klopp is really good with man-management. The best bit of advice he's given me so far? Smile. Enjoy it! That's a big thing because if you've got a smile on your face and confidence about you then you're bound to play well in games."

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

LORIS KARIUS



"You learn a lot of stuff at a great club like this and I think I've taken the positives and negatives from last year and learned from it. But I think before every game there should be the right amount of tension so you can get your best level. That's normal, that's adrenaline."

DECEMBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6


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RAGNAR'S LIFE AFTER LIVERPOOL? THAT WOULD BE TALLINN

The Estonian centre-back has been in outstanding form for the Reds this season and has big plans once his playing days end

Liverpool centre-back Ragnar Klavan enjoys his football and while he hopes to continue playing to a high level for a while yet, he already has one eye on a coaching career.

The 32-year-old centre-back helped the Reds keep eight clean-sheets in the 16 games he started up to Boxing Day last year. Then came his last-gasp winner at Burnley on New Year's Day. Clearly he's relishing playing his part in the Liverpool squad.

However, the affable Estonian also has one eye on his future and is likely to obtain a future role in youth coaching at Tallinna Kalev, a club back in his homeland – after all, he is their president! Ragnar was appointed to the role in May 2016 and in his down-time from life at Anfield he has one eye on the fortunes of the club who achieved promotion to the Estonian top-flight earlier this year.

"I already knew many, many years go that I want to be involved in Estonian football when I'm done with my career and hopefully try to give back to the Estonian Football Society from what I have done and what I have learned during these years when I have been a professional.

> **NOBODY MAKES IT OVERNIGHT – NOT EVEN MESSI OR RONALDO – WITHOUT A LOT OF HARD WORK**

"I want to help people understand what is required to play at the top level and understand that kind of, if not struggle, hard work that it takes to make it. Nobody makes it overnight – nobody. Not even Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo made it without a lot of hard work. An opportunity came up for me to get involved in this club and I know that when I eventually go back to Estonia, I will continue to do that job and hopefully be a youth trainer in the club."

Asked whether he pays close attention to the daily happenings at Tallinna Kalev, he's unequivocal. "Yes, because when you are the president you need to know what is happening! I am not in daily contact but I would say that every couple of weeks or so I have an update. I am pretty confident that this club is in the right hands right now. One of my really good friends is the sports director there and I have full trust in him. I know he does a really




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Ragnar's late show: we're well into added-time at Turf Moor when Oxlade-Chamberlain's teasing free-kick is

great job there and so when I get back we can do it together."

The club's football team, who play at the 11,500-capacity Kalev Central Stadium, were one of the surprise packages of the season in the Estonia's Esiliiga, the country's second-tier. They finished as runners-up, three points adrift of champions Maardu LM to secure promotion.

"These are exciting times for the club," continues Klavan. "When we got involved with the club, our plans were to get to the Meistriliiga [top league] in 2018, but because the team played so well we had no other way! So, it is an exciting time for everyone at the club and they are just in a development phase too, building everything up from the youth to the main team and everything that's around the club too."

Klavan speaks passionately about wanting to help young Estonians achieve the dream of playing at a high level and, perhaps, in the Premier League. He was inspired as a youngster by seeing the achievement of Mart Poom, the goalkeeper who became the first from the country to play in the English top-flight with Derby County, Sunderland and Arsenal.

During the recent international break Ragnar eclipsed Poom's tally of 120 international caps, taking his own to 122. He hopes his experiences at Anfield can inspire the next generation of Estonian youngsters to pick up the baton.

"For me, it's kind of hard to judge my own situation or my own influence on what is around me but I can say what my experience was when I was growing up. Watching Mart be that guy who achieved what he did was career-changing for me and gave me so much of a boost and energy to keep on going and keep on doing it.

"To see that, yes, an Estonian guy can also make it in the Premier League and to see him perform here over a pretty long time, more than a decade, meant he was a really important figure in my whole career."

Klavan now sits fifth in his country's all-time list of most-capped players but insists he will be happy of he doesn't get too close to the man who sits top of that list: midfielder Martin Reim, who earned 157 caps and now manages the national team of which Ragnar is captain.

"I hope I do not overtake Reim because I'm hoping that soon there will be a time when somebody will push me out. So it wouldn't be ideal if I just kept on playing because for the whole development of our football I would hope that there is going to be a guy who pushes me out and leaves me with no other option than to step aside.

"As I say, it's hard to judge my own career and how much it can influence people or not but I'm hoping that, just as Mart Poom gave me that boost, so it would be the same for somebody else to get that kind of extra push or extra motivation to do the hard work to make it to the top level."

Interview: William Hughes

headed across Burnley's goal by Lovren for Klavan to launch the ball (along with himself!) into the net



One dream Klavan hopes the future generations of players in his country can achieve is qualifying for a Euros or World Cup finals. He admits to feeling a tinge of envy when watching last month's World Cup draw after Estonia finished fourth in their qualification group behind Belgium, Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"Of course I'd have loved to have gone to the finals in Russia. It's maybe a dream that will never come true for me but it would be perfect to help build the next generation who would be able to fight for that ticket to a World Cup or a Euros.

"I would like to see myself staying in football when my playing days do come to an end, but I see myself as a youth trainer rather than a professional coach. Why is that? Because as the saying goes: it easier to bend a young tree than an old tree. I hope my influence can be greater there because youth should be the main focus in our country if we want to improve our football."

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FIND OUT LIVERPOOL WANT YOU... IT'S JUST: WOW!

A story for every aspiring young footballer: how Kris Peterson came of age at LFC



Kris in Heracles colours

It was seven years ago when Swedish winger Kristoffer Peterson, then just 16 years old, began a whole new chapter in his life. And looking back today, he says, "that was when the real meaning of Liverpool Football Club and why it is so special was on display."

Now playing for Heracles in the Dutch Eredivisie, he's referring to his first few weeks as an FC Academy player, having joined from Savedalens IF in his homeland. "It was a massive change: moving country and starting a new life. Initially I stayed down at the docks with my mum and stepdad, but he got leukaemia and had to go back to Sweden for treatment.

"It was a lot to deal with, but the people at the Academy looked after me so well and helped me get through that time. They really helped me to settle in and showed why Liverpool is regarded as a unique club."

He continues: "Some people have a very steady youth or upbringing without too many setbacks, so if they had encountered something like that, it might have been enough to make them give up and go home. I'd had a few setbacks before then – problems with my father that I know a lot more about now – so I think that helped me to deal with everything. My family were great, too, with my sisters and mum always coming over to visit when they could."

From an early age he'd "wanted to get out of the house, and football was the perfect way to do that. It was my escape. My mother encouraged me to play because she wanted me to have a hobby, something that would take my mind off everything else. But she was also busy looking after three children. The interest in football and pursuing it came from me, really. That's how it started."


WARRIOR
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From initially kicking a ball around with friends, Kris began to play with local side Savedalens IF in the suburbs of Swedish capital Gothenburg. It was there where he attracted the attention of LFC scouts and was asked to go for a trial.

While he was on Merseyside a volcanic ash cloud meant his stay had to be extended, and during that extra time he trained some more and even played in a friendly game against the Academy staff – including Kenny Dalglish.

"You simply can't imagine what it's like to find out that Liverpool want you. I came from a place where nobody had ever played professional football apart from maybe one guy back in the 1950s. The idea of such a move wasn't really something that had occurred to me because it wasn't part of playing football in my neighbourhood. I just played for fun, really. The moment that Liverpool came on the scene, it was just: wow!

A few months after arriving he moved in to digs in Eccleston alongside Ryan McLaughlin, a young full-back from Northern Ireland. "At first I was very shy and really unsure about being in somebody else's house and eating their food or using their stuff. But I settled down and we had a really good laugh.

"Ryan [currently with Oldham Athletic] is like a brother now. I think when you spend a few years in the same house – having a laugh, arguing sometimes and trying to make it at Liverpool – then you become close. We're still in touch."

The LFC under-16 team coached by Mike Marsh was Peterson's introduction to English football before he progressed to the U18s. "The difference between Sweden and Liverpool was massive and it wasn't just the on-field stuff. It was everything off the field too, such as preparation or diet. For example, back in Sweden it was probably normal to go to McDonalds two or three times per week. To go from that to being at Liverpool was a huge change.

"I really had a lot to learn. The people at the Academy helped me so much. Guys like [head of education and welfare] Phil Roscoe were quite tough with me at times, even in front of my mother. But I think I really needed that. Being at the Academy helped me to grow up and become a man."

During the 2013/14 season he was part of the U21 side before being loaned out to Tranmere Rovers in November for a month. That temporary period on the Wirral, he feels, ignited his campaign. "Before then I had been a bit in and out of the reserves. Instead, I had mainly been training with the U18s. I then had a good spell with Tranmere and when I came back to Liverpool in the spring I think that I played in every reserve game, scored some goals and signed a new contract."

There was also an eleven-minute runout in an end-of-friendly victory over Shamrock Rovers in Dublin. That glimpse of the senior set-up sent him in to the summer break determined to continue progressing. "I kept working hard to ensure I was ready for pre-season because I thought I might get another chance with the first team in some friendlies. The only way that was going to happen was to give my all in every session.

I KEPT FIGHTING FOR A PLACE IN THE SQUAD FOR THE PRE-SEASON TRIP TO AMERICA AND I GOT IT

"When you go to Melwood with the first team, that must be your approach because if you are not on it you can just as quickly be sent back to the reserves. I had a little bit of luck too because [attacker] Jack Dunn got injured and I think that improved my chances. I managed to do well in the training and found myself in the squad for the first friendly game against Brondby and scored.

"At that stage I wasn't supposed to be in the group that was going to America [on the pre-season tour] but my attitude was to keep fighting for a place on that trip. I then did well as a sub against Preston and scored again. Afterwards Brendan [Rodgers] said I would be going to America. Everything had changed really quickly for me."

While Stateside in the summer of 2014 he was involved in fixtures against Roma, AC Milan and Manchester United. But when the squad returned to the UK to begin the Premier League campaign he was told that the club had accepted an offer from Dutch side Utrecht.



Scoring in pre-season for Liverpool v Brondby, July 2014


Training with the man, USA pre-season tour 2014

Stay and fight for a place in a hugely competitive squad or go somewhere else where there was a genuine offer of senior football, were his choices.

"It wasn't an easy decision to make," he reflects."I didn't want to leave but I wasn't sure how much playing time I would get. The club were bringing in a lot of new guys; they spent over £100m getting Rickie Lambert, Adam Lallana, Lazar Markovic, Mario Balotelli and Emre Can. As a youngster when you see that happening you wonder if you will get a chance.

"The team had just finished second and people thought they could challenge for the title again in 2014/15. It's very difficult for a manager to put young players in the side when you are near the top of the league. As it turned out they went on to finish sixth and quite a few youngsters did feature. I think I would have been involved too.

"I thought Utrecht could be a good move for me. I'd watched a lot of Eredivisie football growing up and the chance to play first-team games was the main factor. That was my priority.

"Do I look back now and think I should have stayed? Maybe. But you don't know what is ahead and you can only make the best decision at that particular time. I think I did that."

Words John Hynes

He left in August 2014, and it's been three years of mixed fortunes in the Netherlands. "At Utrecht it went well for a while. I played some games and was enjoying it. But then a coach came in who didn't use wingers so I immediately knew that wasn't good for me.

"I'm not going to lie, it became tough. For the last six months there [at Utrecht] I wasn't even in the squad. I trained on my own a lot because I had a good contract and the club had financial issues."

A loan-period at Roda JC was followed by a permanent switch to Heracles last season. "With the way things went at Utrecht my only priority was just to get back playing football again. I was prepared to go anywhere for that. I needed the buzz of playing again, that sense of waking up on the morning of a game and being excited. There is nothing better.

"I told Heracles how much I wanted that back. I trusted them and it's been really good. They play 4-3-3 so straightaway it's a better fit for me. When you arrive somewhere new you need to know that the club and manager believe in you. That makes all the difference. I have it here."

Kris underwent surgery on a knee issue that'd been bothering him for some time – "a meniscus problem, I tried to play through it but there came a point where I had to have the operation" – then featured in the final 13 minutes of a shock win over Ajax on the opening weekend of the 2017/18 season. "It was a massive result. I don't know if the team has ever had more luck but we took that and have tried to build on it."

Two days later he was playing 90 minutes for the reserves against Feyenoord. "The Ajax game was obviously big, but the reserve team game was also big for me. I remember a time when I used to sometimes dismiss games like that. Now I realise just how important they are because it's a chance to show that you want to compete for a place. I take these games very seriously."

His ambition is to secure a first-team spot with Heracles. "I owe them for believing in me and I want to repay that faith." But, he admits, "I don't think it's any secret that I love the UK and the football there. After Sweden I see it as my second home because I had such a good time at Liverpool.

"For now that's not something I think about. I'm just delighted to be back playing again because I missed it so much and I'm grateful to Heracles.

"I'm not playing for the money. It's just about enjoying football again – that's the best feeling."



Neil Mellor

Everything is there for Van Dijk to become a Liverpool leader

I must admit I was surprised when Liverpool announced the signing of Virgil van Dijk. I thought the chance to acquire the Dutch international had come and gone in August, so to get him so early during the January transfer window was excellent business as it allows Jürgen Klopp to integrate him far more quickly than if he'd been a last-minute arrival in January.

Straightaway he made an immediate impact by scoring an FA Cup third-round winner at home to Everton on his debut, easing the pressure of the £75m transfer fee and creating an instant bond with Liverpool supporters. What a moment!

We're fortunate as Liverpool supporters. We've experienced 'one of those moments' on numerous occasions and when Van Dijk headed home that winner in front of the Kop it felt like another 'I was there moment' for those inside Anfield.

The game was finely poised at 1-1 and looked like it was going to a replay but then up popped the head of Van Dijk to write his name into Merseyside derby folklore. It was a brave header. Jordan Pickford was flying out with his fists and Joel Matip was leaping in front of him after being shoved by Mason Holgate, but he still timed it perfectly and made no mistake.

The focus has been on Van Dijk being a great defensive signing but he's already proved that he will give Liverpool an added threat from set-pieces. With the exception of Martin Skrtel in 2013/14, the Reds have lacked goals from centre-half since Sami Hyypia left the club, and while it was encouraging that Ragnar Klavan got the late winner at Burnley it's an area Liverpool need more goals from.

I'd argue the same regarding the midfield. The front four have been outstanding in terms of goals but now that Philippe Coutinho has left there needs to be more of a contribution from others and that includes midfielders and defenders.

I also thought that Joel Matip performed better against Everton for being alongside Van Dijk that night. It remains to be seen whether he, Dejan Lovren, Joe Gomez or Klavan partner Van Dijk regularly, but I think there is more to come from Matip.

He's in pole position to play alongside the Dutchman if he can avoid more injuries, but whoever Jürgen Klopp goes for I believe it's important to build a long-term central-defensive partnership for consistency as that could really strengthen Liverpool defensively. It wasn't a position I played in, but from speaking to ex-team-mates who played at centre-half they feel having an established, consistent understanding there benefits both the goalkeeper and the team as a defensive unit.

One of Van Dijk's other big strengths is his leadership qualities, but talk of him being the next Liverpool captain is a little premature. Between now and the end of the season it's all about settling in at Liverpool for him, getting a full understanding of what the football club is all about in terms of expectations and using the platform he has been given to show how good he is.

No offence to his former club, but Southampton v Man United is not Liverpool v Man United. Van Dijk will be playing in truly big fixtures in both the Premier League and Champions League now – games where the pressure will be on.

He'll be going straight into knockout football in Europe's top competition and he will have to perform because if he doesn't, the transfer fee that Liverpool paid will be constantly thrown at him by the press and rival supporters. Seventy-five million is a lot of money, but for that Liverpool have bought the finished article instead of paying £20m or £30 for someone who might progress to become a £50m centre-half, but might not.

You can see that Van Dijk has a calm personality, as many Dutch players do, and he takes things in his stride. He also has the potential to be a big, big player for Liverpool – like Hyypia was when he wore the number four shirt – and a leader over a long-term period.

As I said before, his winning goal against Everton has already ensured a connection with the Liverpool fans and I believe Virgil van Dijk has got all the attributes to be the commanding leader at centre-half that we all wanted to see in a red shirt.



Virgil van Dijk has all the components to be an LFC great



Red Neighbours









L.F.C.

A fan is snapped with the European Cup at a Red Neighbours event. Red Neighbours supports local residents and schools in which Liverpool postcode? **Answer on page 98**

All the latest news as the club and its players strive to make a difference on and off the pitch

CLUB



REDS MEET THE REAL STARS OF LIVERPOOL

The first-team's annual Alder Hey visit brought smiles and prezzies for lots of youngsters





At the end of last year the Liverpool FC squad took time-out to spread some festive cheer and bring a little ho-ho-ho to Alder Hey on their annual Christmas trip to the hospital.

Ahead of a session at Melwood, the players and staff made the short trip from their training-base to the nearby hospital. Manager Jürgen Klopp and captain Jordan Henderson led the rest of the first-team around the wards, with players splitting into groups to meet as many of the youngsters as possible. They spent time chatting to patients and their families and posing for photos, and they also handed out LFC gifts during their afternoon at the hospital, which treats 270,000 children each year.

In his subsequent matchday programme notes (for the West Brom game at Anfield) the manager wrote: "I would like to say what a privilege it is to take the players to this amazing place. The bravery of the children humbles and inspires us. The resilience of the parents and family is the definition of love in its purest form. And the amazing staff – not just the incredible doctors and nurses but all of the staff – are people that the city

> **THE BRAVERY OF THE CHILDREN HUMBLES AND INSPIRES US, THIS IS AN AMAZING PLACE**

of Liverpool is rightly very proud of."

Skipper Henderson also made a point of mentioning Alder Hey in his own programme notes for the Merseyside derby: "Visiting the hospital is a privilege for us...a time when those of us who are extremely fortunate in our lives can offer some support and hopefully a little relief to kids and families having a really difficult time of it.

"It's also an occasion that helps brings a lot of perspective. You realise that real courage and bravery happens in places like Alder Hey, not on a football pitch."

Over the years Alder Hey has enjoyed a special relationship with LFC, welcoming several managers and lots of players through its doors. Along with the first-team squad, the club's Academy squad and Liverpool Ladies team regularly visit wards too.

Alder Hey Children's Charity also works in partnership with LFC Foundation, raising funds to help young patients and their families through special events like the annual LFC Legends match at Anfield.

Melwood
Training Facility

Caroline and Carol

Lucas broke our hearts!

Meet the Melwood canteen's 'heart and soul' who look after the Liverpool lads

One of the most popular regular features on the club's official website is Behind the Badge – which tells the individual stories of those who work tirelessly away from the spotlight to help make Liverpool FC successful.

The series has profiled members of staff across the first-team, Academy and Ladies set-ups who dedicate their lives to the club every day, and just recently it was the turn of long-serving and much-loved kitchen duo, Carol Farrell and Caroline Guest.

They've both been employed at the Melwood for 13 years, with their partnership starting in 2004/05.

When Luis Suarez came back to visit Melwood in March 2016, he made a point of catching up with them. Carol calls him "a lovely lad – he was so down-to-earth, we'd always have a laugh and a joke with him." The pair were also invited to the unveiling of The Kenny Dalglish Stand by the man himself, while Carol joined Steven Gerrard on the red carpet at the LFC players awards at Anfield last May.

One of their real favourites was Lucas, who left for Lazio last year. "I was so upset when he went," says Caroline. "He was a baby when he arrived here and he grew into a man. His family and his wife were lovely people."

Carol adds: "When he came back in with his family to say 'ta-ra' I sobbed. I haven't spoken to him since he left but we've got his phone number. I hope he hasn't bin-bagged us for two Italian women!"

Current Reds skipper Jordan Henderson paid tribute to the girls in his recent matchday programme notes, calling Carol and Caroline "the heart and soul of the canteen. They would do anything for anyone.

"I loved reading that article on the website because it highlighted that a football club is about far more than just people like us, the players and coaches, who get all the limelight and credit when things are going well.

"Carol and Caroline represent the sort of humour and spirit that gives Melwood warmth and personality as a place to go into work. Right through the building and outside working on the pitches and across the facility, we are blessed with brilliant individuals."



MASSIVE RESPECT

Ragnar and Danny drop by to meet youngsters from inspirational LFC Foundation programme

Participants at the gang-crime workshop

The Kenny Dalglish Stand was the recent venue for the LFC Foundation's Respect 4 All annual party – and the programme's children and young people were joined by Danny Ings and Ragnar Klavan.

The Reds duo signed autographs and posed for pictures, then presented awards to the programme's participants, who all have additional needs and each received a certificate and medal during a special end-of-year ceremony. There was also an LFC-themed raffle and a disco.

Danny said: "It's always great to come to these kind of events and meet the fans. As players it's important for us to get involved in the local community and give something back, so Ragnar and I were really pleased to be invited along. We had a brilliant time."

The Foundation has two Respect 4 All centres – one in Anfield, the other on the Wirral – which both deliver free impairment-specific coaching to young people and adults with complex additional needs.

Meanwhile the Foundation's Premier League Kicks programme has completed a series of workshops aimed at eradicating gang-crime from the streets of Merseyside.

Working alongside Get Away 'N' Get Safe (GANGS), the sessions focused on educating, inspiring and empowering local youngsters to take control of their future and reject the gang lifestyle.

The Premier League Kicks programme has also continued its successful relationship with the charity Street Doctors, a Liverpool-born nationwide scheme run by medical students.

Premier League Kicks participants duly attended interactive sessions aimed at equipping young people with the skills to administer immediate first-aid in a medical emergency, in particular, injuries sustained from knife or gun attacks.

Liverpool FC is passionate about its local community and its official charity LFC Foundation delivers a wide range of programmes and partnerships to create life-changing opportunities for children and young people. For more please visit **foundation.liverpoolfc.com**.



Foundation
THE CLUB'S OFFICIAL CHARITY


Who's for a singalong?

WINTER WARMER

Rushie and Gary Mac among those entertaining local residents at big Anfield party


Rushie chatting to guests

The club's Red Neighbours programme held two special events at Anfield at the end of the year to celebrate the festive season with hundreds of local residents.

Around 450 pensioners were invited to the parties, with Red Neighbours linking up with Merseyside Police, local councillors and a variety of social housing and community groups in a bid to tackle social isolation during the Christmas period. Reds legends Ian Rush and Gary McAllister and club CEO Peter Moore joined the celebrations, chatting to guests and taking part in a lively festive sing-a-long.

During the winter months the main focus of the Red Neighbours team is social isolation, with events and activities taking place in the local community to combat loneliness and seclusion among residents.

Liverpool FC works with local residents, community groups and schools in and around the Anfield area as part of its Red Neighbours programme, focusing on supporting some of the key issues in Anfield including: food poverty and education, the elderly, getting the community physically-active and creating memorable experiences for young people.

For more information follow @Red_Neighbours on Twitter.



Red Neighbours



Club CEO Peter Moore


Tuck in everyone!

Gary Mac with partygoers





CLASS ACTS

Stars go back to school as part of club initiative to connect first-teamers with young people

Reds players Trent Alexander-Arnold and Dominic Solanke headed back to the classroom recently when they visited local youngsters at Blackmoor Park Junior School in West Derby.

The pair made the short trip from the Melwood training complex to spend the afternoon meeting pupils from years 3, 4, 5 and 6, taking part in two mini-assemblies and a Q&A and signing autographs.

Last season Liverpool FC committed to first-team players visiting schools in and around the local area after autographs and pictures were stopped outside Melwood for health and safety reasons. This new scheme provides a safer environment for young fans to collect autographs and allows more local children to meet their heroes.



Red Neighbours



Previously this season Reds defender Ragnar Klavan and midfielder Marko Grujic visited Monksdown Primary School, close to Melwood, where they took part in an assembly and posed for pictures with 220 young supporters.

Margaret Aspinall, chair of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, also went along and spoke to the pupils about important life-skills such as integrity, truth and justice.



CAREERS IN FOOTBALL

Local pupils learn about working roles at Liverpool FC in bid to encourage better futures







A group of local students recently attended a career speed-networking event hosted by Red Neighbours at Anfield. Over 50 pupils from Alsop High School, North Liverpool Academy, Notre Dame Catholic College and the Academy of St Francis of Assisi met with club staff to learn about career-paths and different roles at the club.

They chatted with representatives from six Liverpool FC departments about their individual professional journeys and sought advice on how to pursue a successful career in the football industry. It was the fifth event of its kind held at Anfield, with a total of 250 youngsters attending the sessions throughout this calendar year.

Earlier last year pupils from Alsop High, Notre Dame and St Francis also took part at the Red Neighbours PES Tournament in the new Anfield Superstore, along with participants from Cardinal Heenan School and the LFC Foundation Kicks programme – all part of creating memorable experiences for young people.




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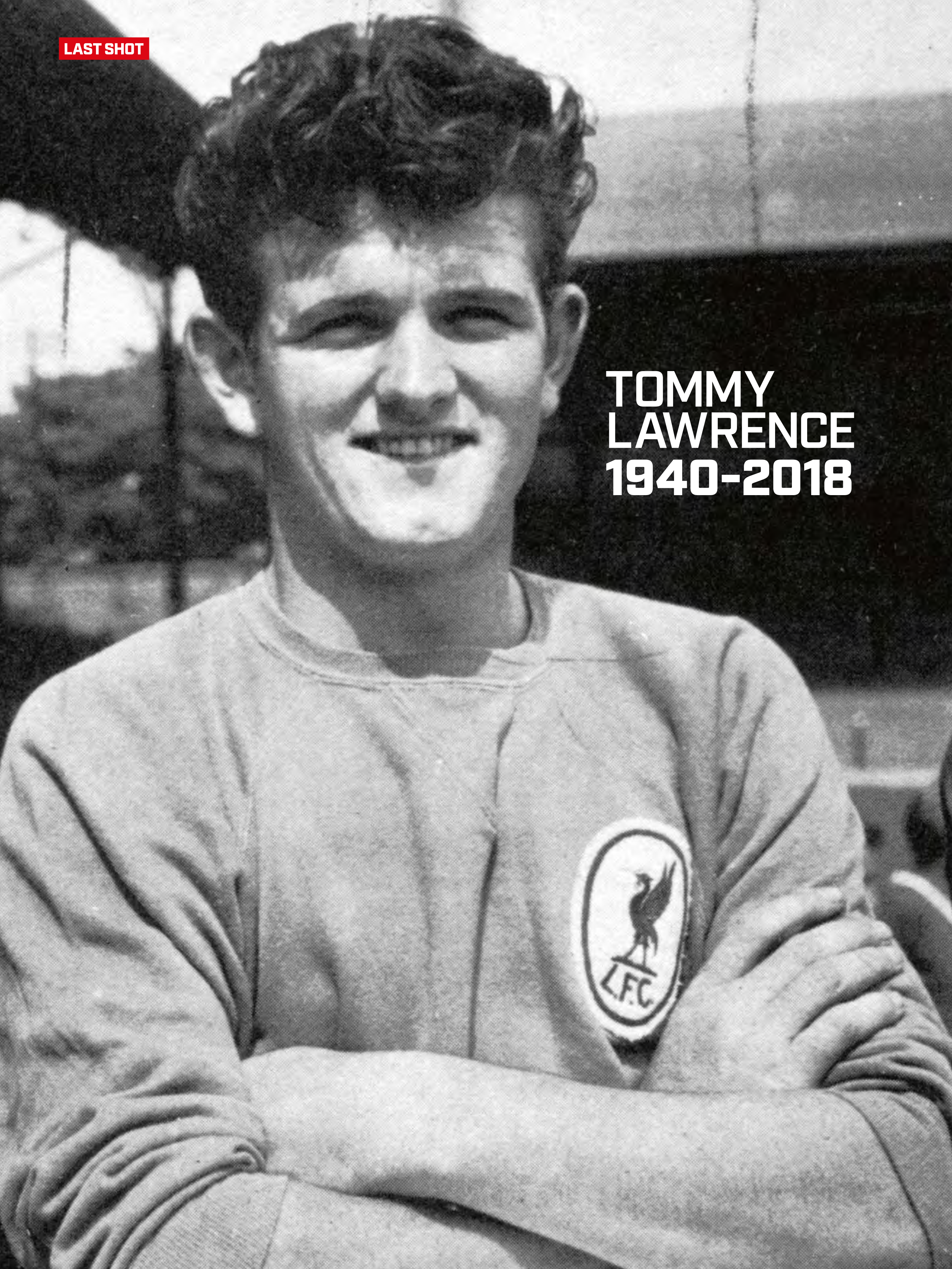


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TOMMY LAWRENCE 1940-2018

QUIZ ANSWERS: LIVERPOOL p13: Liverpool FC first incorporated the Liver Bird into its crest in 1901; **FOOTBALL p23:** Prior to Virgil van Dijk, the last man to join Liverpool FC on a permanent basis in January was Marko Grujic, who signed from Red Star Belgrade in 2016; **CLUB p83:** Red Neighbours was launched in January 2017 to support local residents and schools in the Anfield postcode area of L4.



















































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